

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the above-identified application in view of the present amendment is respectfully requested. Claims 1-12 are pending. Claims 1 and 3 are amended. Claims 5 and 6 are allowed. An interview was held with the examiner regarding the advisory action. Examiner Vinh T. Luong respectfully suggested that Applicant should amend the rejected claim(s) to call for patentable distinguishing structure(s) of the claimed skeleton in order to overcome the art rejection.

Claims 1 and 3 are amended to recite that the skeleton includes a hub and a portion attached to the hub and extending away from the hub. The portion slopes upwardly and outwardly away from said hub with respect to a plane extending across the hub and perpendicular to the axis of rotation of the steering wheel. Neither Albers nor any other prior art discloses or suggests this feature.

By contrast, the skeleton of the steering wheel of Albers is the steering wheel armature 80 and not the backing plate 12. Even if the backing plate 12 is considered to be the skeleton of the steering wheel as alleged by the examiner, Albers fails to disclose that the backing plate slopes upwardly and outwardly away from the hub with respect to a plane extending across the hub and perpendicular to the axis of rotation of the steering wheel. By contrast, the backing plate 12 of Albers is flat and extends parallel with a plane extending across the hub and perpendicular to the axis of rotation of the steering wheel.

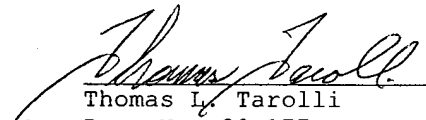
Therefore, claims 1 and 3 are allowable. Claims 2, 7-9 and 11 depend from claim 1 and are therefore allowable as depending from an allowable claim and for the specific features recited therein. Claims 10 and 12 depend from claim 3 and are therefore allowable as depending from an allowable claim and for the specific features recited therein.

Claim 4, which depends from claim 1, should be allowed for the same reasons as claim 1 and also for the additional feature that the support component and the detent pin form a prefabricated assembly. Albers does not disclose this feature. By contrast, Albers discloses that the pin 30 is fixed to the base plate 14 by the attachment of the backing plate 12. Therefore, claim 4 is allowable.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the above-identified application is in condition for allowance, and allowance of the above-identified application is respectfully requested.

Please charge any deficiency or credit any overpayment in the fees for this amendment to our Deposit Account No. 20-0090.

Respectfully submitted,


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